

“Aloha!” A sample, too short to be identified - a cartoon animal, maybe. A calm pulse, then another. In the background abstract traces of other notes. The faintest guitar harmonics give way to someone groaning, quietly, like an out-take. Just as suddenly it's cut off by rapid atonal tuned percussion - a single hi-hat before the voice groans back in. More manic percussive hammering. The hi-hat stirs again, and now these gauzy pads are fading in and out. A furious squawk of dyspeptic guitar-and-drums breaks through for a second. The drum machine re-enters, tries to establish a groove with a wandering bass, wraps itself around some more dustbowl guitar skronk and finally fires off everywhere at once like someone's just poured a coffee into it. This is the first minute.

It's another bad year for trailblazing musicians dying. So far, we've lost Frankie Knuckles, Pete Seeger, Bob Casale of Devo, The Mighty Hannibal, DJ Rashad, Wayne “Sleg Teng” Smith, Bobby Womack,

and appeared on over 150 albums. It seems almost ridiculous that someone like him could die.

The method - meticulous, patient, pragmatic and determinedly working against the limitations of his equipment - is a constant throughout Adam's work. A 1997 local (Columbus, Indiana) newspaper article about 11-year-old Adam describes him impressing Bill Gates with his self-taught computer skills. You can hear the same impulses throughout Scissor Shock's *Psychic Existentialism*, the album which opened this piece and which I consider his finest musical work.

Here's how Scissor Shock's MySpace described the group (along with some sad foreshadowing):

“there really is no point in discussing “genre” as scissor shock operates on its own fucked-up logic, and language, though the words ‘free jazz’ and ‘rock in opposition’ and ‘avant-progressive no wave’ are often thrown ss' way. the band continues to mutate wildly with every



ADAM COOLEY

Tommy Ramone, Idris Muhammad and Charlie Haden. But when year-end retrospectives get printed, one name that probably won't appear in most of them - but should - is that of Adam Cooley.

Firstly, it's a tragedy that this should even be a consideration. Adam, a multimedia artist, no-budget experimental filmmaker and explorer of the outer reaches of sound in the “ghost sludge” duo Robe, and the basically indescribable Scissor Shock died this February at just 27. Although we'd never met in person, and he could be elusive even on the Internet, he was one of the most restlessly creative and vital people I'd ever encountered. When he wasn't throwing himself into no-budget film-making (seriously no-budget: filmed with a \$24 camera whose mic he also used to capture sound which he edited in Windows' ancient Sound Recorder software; the visuals he mostly edited in MS Paint and compiled in Windows Movie Maker), he was drawing up vast and enthusiastic lists of his favourite films and records, or making vast elemental drones or incredible microsampled soundscapes with his various musical projects. He made eight films

release, and will do so until adam dies.

songs can take months to write, some even take years. adam doesn't use a drum machines or sequencers, he drops beats and samples in one nanosecond at a time. adam uses sound recorder and cool edit pro. if adam breaks a string, then the rest of the song won't have that string. if adam's computer crashes while working on a song, adam considers the song done. scissor shock is constantly striving to create a new sound, and doesn't believe in making the same album twice. enjoy”

The group's stated influences on the MySpace page are “Captain Beefheart, acid techno, Sun City Girls”, and this makes good sense when listening to *Psychic Existentialism*. The Beefheart angle is the most immediately obvious, with parts of the album sounding like Entroducing-era DJ Shadow mixing only Trout Mask Replica skronk-guitar samples. But then there's also bits that sound like a hoedown band attempting Detroit techno, a gamelan trio, film audio, brooding

DECOMPRESSION

RECORD LABEL of THE ISSUE

COLD SPRING



NAME: COLD SPRING RECORDS

ORIGIN: LONDON, UK

FOUNDED: 1990

TYPE: VINYL, CD, CASSETTE

STYLE: INDUSTRIAL, DARK AMBIENT, NEOCLASSICAL, POWER ELECTRONICS, NOISE, DRONE, EXPERIMENTAL

ARTISTS: PSYCHIC TV, MERZBOW, IRON FIST OF THE SUN, LAIBACH, SKULLFLOWER, SUTCLIFFE JUGEND, Z'EV, SLEEP RESEARCH FACILITY

LATEST RELEASE: TREPANERINGSRITUALEN - PERFECTION AND PERFORMANCE

WEBSITE: WWW.COLDSPRING.CO.UK

Run a label? Want to be featured in this column next issue? Hit us up!

Where you might have seen them live!

Supporting Dead Harts and Black Dogs at Sticky Mike's on 17/3/2013

Supporting Weathered Hands and Black Art at Sticky Mike's also on 9/4/2014,

Playing alongside Kilkovec, Bastard Eye Scream and edityourhometown at The Prince Albert on 12/3/14

Plans for 2014?

Put out a fresh ep, gigging as much as humanly possible, meeting more rad people in the musical community and having all the fun.

Contact:

<https://www.facebook.com/unbeliever.uk>

desert-blues, a mutant drum circle, sinister brass cascades, busked folk, found sound and family recordings, malfunctioning drum machines and slashing no-wave riffs - sometimes all in the course of one song.

One thing Adam's method was not was random. Although he allowed chance elements in his work (accepting equipment failures, not correcting errors), everything in there is meticulously structured and thought-out. On this, he said:

"Yes, this album is a sensory overload, throwing as many riffs and little sounds as it can throw at you, but it still maintains "structure" (as in, I actually wrote these songs; there's not really improvisation except for the acoustic only tracks). If you treat it as background music, you might be convinced that these songs ARE indeed "random", but if you pay attention to a xylophone, a marimba, a bass, and an electric guitar playing 250 similar(sic) notes in a row, you will realize that there's actual songwriting -- it's just unconventional."

The album's centrepiece is its sprawling 9-minute title track; so complex that it took 25 months to complete. It's an amazing achievement, an enormous collaged soundscape packing in some 250 distinct riffs and cycling through every type of sound and style imaginable. At this point, Scissor Shock were doing something akin to modern classical composition but post-processed by computer beyond being playable. Four years on from the album's release I still can't really think of anything to compare it to.

I could probably get theoretical and attempt to make some case about how the meticulous structuring and massive fragmentation of *Psychic Existentialism*, and Adam's work in general, reflects those things in modern society. Or I could talk about the music's oddly dreamlike quality - how it never quite gives you a full picture, how it pulls the rug every time you're about to get a firm grasp on something - and I could go on about that amazing layering forever. But you need to hear this yourself. Adam was a man whose art was his life, and he lives on through it. I'll leave the last word to him; here responding to an interview question about what he thought was the highlight of his discography.

"GET EVERY RELEASE, DELETE THE ONES YOU DON'T LIKE AND SHARE THE REST ON SOULSEEK. THE END." **BC**

A FACEBOOK GROUP DEDICATED TO ADAMS WORK CAN BE FOUND AT [FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/ADAMCOOLEYFILMS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/adamcooleyfilms) AND YOU'LL FIND LINKS THERE TO DOWNLOAD HIS OUTPUT AND BROWSE HIS MANY PROJECTS.

Adam Cooley

INTRODUCING UNBELIEVER

For Fans Of: *Botch, The Chariot, Norma Jean, Rage Against The Machine, The Dillinger Escape Plan*

Who is UNBELIEVER?

Matt Claxton (drums), Tom Dunt (vocals), James Thomas (bass), Marc Le Cras (guitar) 4 close friends with a passion for playing socially charged, heavy as fuck music, without being told what to do. We're a DIY band who write music to be played live. This is about getting in a room, making some noise and getting lost in the moment in the hope others will get lost with us.

Record Labels / Affiliates

Sponsored by independent clothing line Anything Goes Apparel.

Musical inspirations?

Punk/Hardcore, Reuben, Bill Hicks, Terence McKenna, La Dispute, It's always sunny in Philadelphia, doing what you actually enjoy, Fall of Troy, Adventure Time, Eyedea and Abilities

Photography © Ajit Dutta